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SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

THE SANDMAN

Dream Country

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DAVE MCKEAN

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Chapter Three: In Which We Wake

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THE STONE DOORS OF THE MAUSOLEUM OPENED (APPARENTLY OF THEIR OWN VOLITION, FOR THERE WAS NO ONE TO OPEN THEM) AND THE PEOPLE, AND THE DREAMS, AND THE GODS, AND ALL MANNER OF OTHER CREATURES AND BEINGS, WENT IN, EACH ONE AFTER ITS FASHION.

AND ALREADY THE CONVERSATIONS AND INDISCRETIONS AND INTOXICATIONS OF THE NIGHT BEFORE HAD BEGUN TO VANISH, LIKE THE MISTS OF NIGHT, IN THE HEAT OF THE MORNING.

AND THEN THE NIGHT WAS OVER, AND THE DAY BEGAN.

THE MOURNERS TOOK THEIR SEATS, ONE BY ONE, WITHOUT HESITATION OR QUESTION. NO ONE DIRECTED THEM, BUT THEY WALKED TO THEIR OWN SEATS AND SAT DOWN, AS QUIETLY AND EFFICIENTLY AS IF THEY'D BEEN REHEARSING FOR THIS MOMENT ALL THEIR LIVES.

THE PEOPLE MOVED AS IF THEIR EVERY MOVE WERE FOREORDAINED, AS IF THEY HAD NO TRUE WILL OF THEIR OWN.

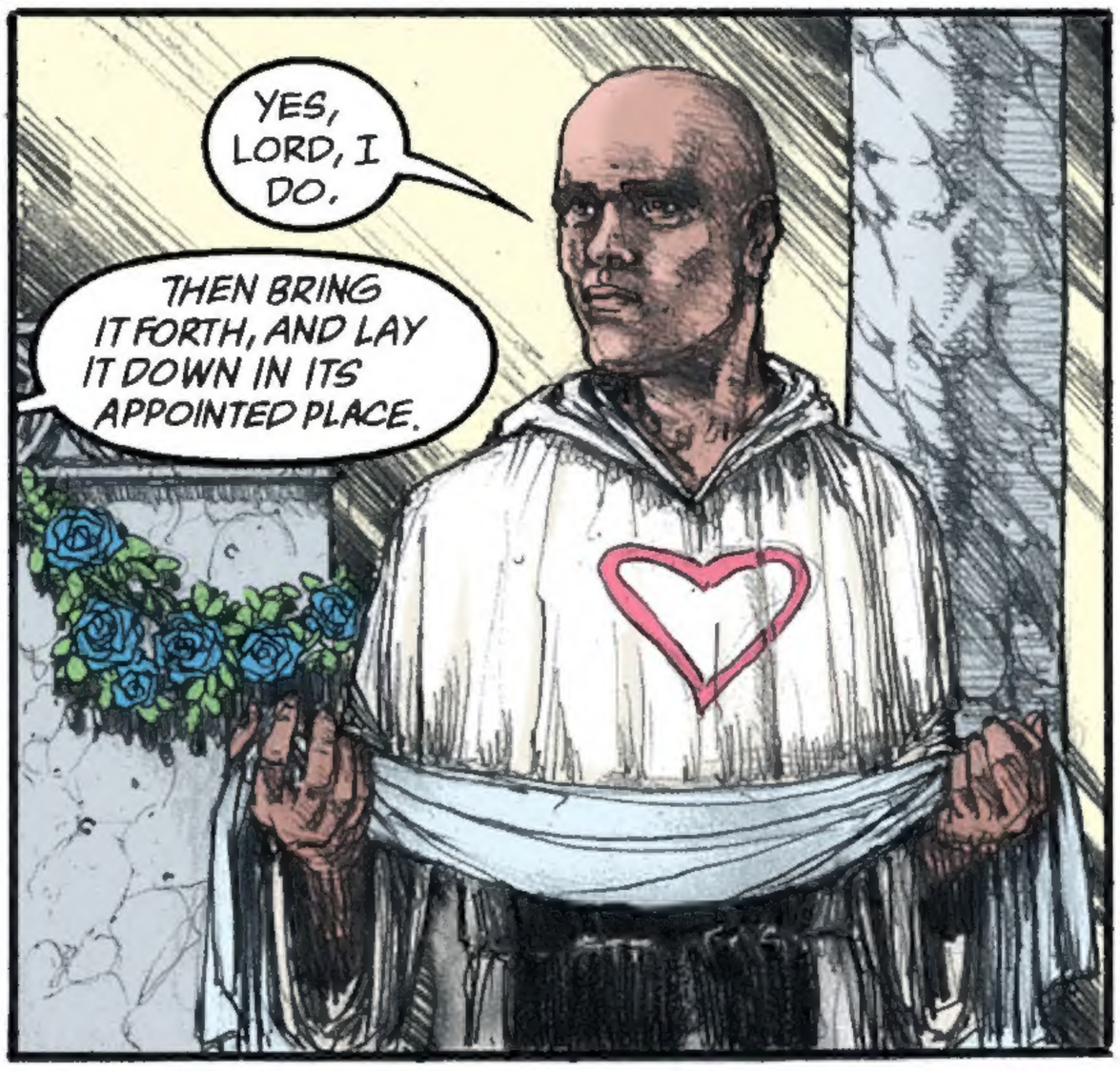
AS IF THEIR EVERY ACTION WERE WRITTEN LONG AGO, IN A BOOK.

BUT WHICH BOOK?

AND THE LAST OF THE MULTITUDE TOOK HER, OR HIS, OR ITS APPOINTED PLACE.

AND THE CEREMONY BEGAN.

YOU HAVE THE CEREMENT?


YES, LORD, I DO.
THEN BRING IT FORTH, AND LAY IT DOWN IN ITS APPOINTED PLACE.

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO REMEMBER MY BROTHER, WHO WAS THE LORD OF THIS REALM; TO PAY OUR RESPECTS, AND THEN, ULTIMATELY, TO FORGET HIM.

I AM THE OLDEST. IT FALLS TO ME TO BEGIN.

I AM NOT ACCUSTOMED TO SPEAKING IN PUBLIC.

"UNACCUSTOMED AS I AM TO PUBLIC SPEAKING, OR INDEED SPEAKING AT ALL..."

I HAVE VERY LITTLE TO SAY.

STOPPIT. STOPPIT STOPPIT STOPPIT TALKING STOPPIT.

MY BROTHER PERFORMED HIS TASKS TO THE BEST OF HIS ABILITY; FULFILLED HIS OBLIGATIONS AS WELL AS HE WAS ABLE; AND HE IS NO LONGER WITH US.

IT BEHOOVES ONE, ON SUCH AN OCCASION, TO ILLUMINATE THE CHARACTER OF THE DEPARTED FOR THOSE LISTENING.

BUT I SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE, AND AS THEY WERE, AND AS THEY WILL BE.

AND HE WAS THE LORD OF THE THINGS THAT ARE NOT, AND WERE NOT, AND NEVER WILL BE...

HE WAS MY BROTHER.

HE'S READIN'.

HE'S READIN'. WHAT HE'S SAYIN'. OUT OF HIS BOOK.

PARDON?

SHHH.

'ERE. I KNOW YOU. YOU'RE BOBBY WOSS FACE. THING. GADLINK. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE DEAD FER SURE BY NOW.

SSSSSSH!

NOT ME, MAD HETTIE. NOT YET.

WELL, BUGGER ME SIDEWAYS WITH A CORACLE, IF THAT DOESN'T TAKE THE PORRIDGE.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING **NOW**, LORD?

DO YOU WISH YOU COULD BE THERE **WITH** THEM, LORD?

Let me see... By now they will have started the memorial service. My brother will be speaking.

Not really. I see no need to remember myself. I mean, I am me, after all.

=PRRRRRRRR RRRRRRRRRR=

I KNOW YOU ARE **YOU**, MY LORD. BUT ARE YOU ALSO HIM?

I do not follow you, Hippogriff.

OUR LORD WOULD NOT HAVE DONE AS YOU ARE DOING. IN THE THOUSANDS OF YEARS THAT I SERVED HIM, HE DID NOT TOUCH ME.

No?

HE FED ME SLICES OF APPLE, WITH HIS HANDS, THOUGH, FROM TIME TO TIME.

AND HE WAS ALWAYS **MOST** PLEASANT AND GENTLE-MANNERED.

SAVE WHEN HE WAS DIS-PLEASED.

MY LORD. THERE IS SOMEONE COMING...

How strange. I would not have expected visitors, on this day.

Do you recognize him? Any of you?

NO, MY LORD. DO YOU?

I... I am not certain.

HE RESPECTED MY PEOPLE. WE RESPECTED HIM.

WE WERE NEVER LOVERS, AND WE NEVER *WILL* BE, NOW.

I DO NOT REGRET THAT, HOWEVER. I REGRET THE CONVERSATIONS WE NEVER HAD, THE TIME WE DID NOT SPEND TOGETHER.

I REGRET THAT I NEVER TOLD HIM THAT HE MADE ME HAPPY, WHEN I WAS IN HIS COMPANY. THE WORLD WAS THE BETTER FOR HIS BEING IN IT.

THESE THINGS ALONE DO I NOW REGRET: THINGS LEFT UNSAID.

AND HE IS GONE, AND I AM OLD.

HEY, ROSIE. WHAT YOU SAID LAST NIGHT. YOU ***REALLY*** PREGNANT?

I *THINK* SO. ONLY A TINY WEE BIT. BUT I AM.

HOW D'YOU KNOW?

I KNOW. WOMEN KNOW.

HMPH. THE MANAGER OF THE COFFEE SHOP ACROSS THE STREET FROM SCHOOL, ***SHE*** THOUGHT SHE HAD, LIKE, STOMACH CRAMPS, TURNED OUT TO BE A BABY BOY. SHE WAS ***ALWAYS*** PRETTY HEFTY. Y'KNOW, CHUNKY. BUT ***SHE*** DIDN'T KNOW.

OH.

WELL, I DO.

YOU GOING TO... HAVE IT?

I *THINK* SO.

YOU GOING TO TELL MOM AND ME YOU'RE PREGNANT?

EVENTUALLY.

SO I'LL BE UNCLE JED. ***COOOOL***. FAMILIES ROCK.

AREN'T ***YOU*** THE ONE THAT TOLD ME THAT "FAMILIES SUCK"?

THEY DO BOTH.

THEY ROCK ***AND*** THEY SUCK.

THE BONDS OF FAMILY BIND BOTH WAYS.

THEY BIND US UP, SUPPORT US, ***HELP*** US. AND THEY ARE ALSO A BOND FROM WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT, PERHAPS ***IMPOSSIBLE*** TO EXTRICATE ONE-SELF.

MY LATE ***BROTHER*** BEING A CASE IN POINT.

HAD WE ***NOT*** BEEN FAMILY, WHY ***THEN*** WE COULD HAVE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH EACH OTHER, AND ***BOTH*** OUR LIVES WOULD HAVE BEEN ENRICHED.

INSTEAD, WE WERE SIBLINGS. AND THIS WAS, TO SAY THE ***LEAST***, UNFORTUNATE.

STILL, HE IS ***GONE***. HE ***NEVER*** HAD SENSE ENOUGH TO COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN. BUT HE IS GONE.

THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY.

Good-day to you, sir. The path will take you to the memorial. I believe the service has already begun.

I WON'T BE GOING, LAD.

I'M MERELY PASSING THROUGH YOUR REALM, ON MY WAY TO EVERYWHERE ELSE. THOUGHT I'D STOP HERE FOR A SPELL, AND SAY HELLO.

D'YOU MIND IF I REST MY FEET FOR A WHILE?

No. Please, sit. Can I get you anything to eat or drink?

HM. I'D LIKE A *LOAF* OF BLACK BREAD, AND SOME CHEESE. A *WENSLEYDALE*, OR A CHESHIRE, IF YOU HAVE SUCH A THING ABOUT YOU. AND I'D TAKE WATER OR BEER OR EVEN A MODEST RED TABLE-WINE.

You are my guest, sir. The kitchen staff have gone to the ceremony, but we can see what we can find.

LORD?

He means me no harm, Wyvern. He may enter.

THERE WE GO. BREAD AND CHEESE. *FOOD* OF THE *GODS*. OLYMPUS PRACTICALLY RAN ON WENSLEYDALE,,,

YOU WERE *RIGHT*. I *DON'T*, Y'KNOW.

YOU do not what?

MEAN YOU *HARM*, LADDIE.

D'YOU *KNOW* ME?

,,,I believe so. You are...my brother...

MORE OR LESS.

I *WASN'T* GOING TO COME, AND THEN I THOUGHT, *SOD* IT. I'LL STOP BY, GIVE YOU A LITTLE ADVICE.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN INCLINED TO LISTEN TO MY ADVICE IN THE PAST, BUT, WELL: THINGS *CHANGE*, DON'T THEY?

Yes, they do.

WISE LAD.

THIS IS THE SECOND BROTHER I HAVE LOST, WHISPERED DESPAIR IN HER SHADOWY VOICE, AND EACH OF THE LISTENERS FOUND HERSELF, OR HIMSELF, OR ITSELF, GIVING AN INVOLUNTARY SHIVER. AND IT HURTS.

I CARED FOR HIM, VERY MUCH. HE WAS SO WISE; HE SEEMED SO CERTAIN OF THE RIGHTNESS OF HIS ACTIONS. AND I, WHO DO NOTHING BUT DOUBT, ADMIRED THAT IN HIM.

HE WAS A CREATURE OF HOPE. FOR DREAMS ARE HOPES, AND ECHOES OF HOPES. AND I AM A CREATURE OF DESPAIR.

AND HER WORDS MOVED OVER HER LISTENERS LIKE A BLACK WIND BLOWING ACROSS THEIR HEARTS; AND IN THAT MOMENT EACH OF THEM KNEW DESPAIR.

I THINK OF THE FIRST DESPAIR SOMETIMES, SAID DESPAIR, IT MUST BE OVER A HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS SINCE ANYONE THOUGHT OF HER BUT ME...

AN EYEBLINK, AND SHE IS FORGOTTEN.

AND YOU WILL FORGET: DEATH OR LIFE WILL TAKE HIM FROM YOUR MINDS. I KNOW, WHISPERED DESPAIR, IN HER DISTANT, EMPTY VOICE.

BUT I SHALL REMEMBER HIM.

UH. *HELLO.* YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW ME. MY NAME IS WESLEY DODDS. I ONLY MET THE DEAD GENTLEMAN ONCE.

WE, UH, DIDN'T TALK.

SOMETHING *DIAN* USED TO SAY TO ME. SHE'D SAY, "WES, DON'T SAY ANYTHING UNLESS YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY."

ADVICE I TOOK TO HEART. SHE WOULD ALSO SAY, "IT'S A LONG, LONG TRAIL THAT HAS NO TURNING."

AND HOW *RIGHT* SHE *WAS.*

I'M *NOT* A YOUNG MAN ANYMORE. I'M RETIRED NOW. BUT I SOMETIMES THINK THAT *ALL* THE THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT HAVE MADE IT WORTH THE LIVING HAVE BEEN AS A RESULT OF MY CONNECTION TO THE DEAD GENTLEMAN.

IS THAT NOT AN *ODD* THING TO SAY? DOUBTLESS I SHALL FORGET ALL THIS ON WAKING.

AND THE ANGEL DUMA'S TEAR, CRYSTALLINE AND CLEAR, FILLED THE VISION OF EACH OF THE ONLOOKERS.

REFLECTED IN IT, THEY SAW MERCY, AND MIRACLES, AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT EVERY THING THAT IS, HAS A PURPOSE, AND THAT THE PURPOSE, SOMEHOW, INCLUDED EVERY ONE OF THEM...

...ON A DEEP AND PERSONAL LEVEL.

SIR RAVEN? YOU WILL FOLLOW THE LADY DELIRIUM.

WHAT DO I SAY?

SAY WHATEVER IS IN YOUR HEART.

I DON'T WANT TO SAY SOMETHING.

MY SISTER: YOU HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE. AT THIS POINT IN THE CEREMONY, YOU MUST TALK.

I COULD PLAY WITH MY DOGGIE, INSTEAD. OR NAME ALL THE CLOUDS IN THE WHOLE SKY, ONE BY ONE. I COULD DO A FUNNY SORT OF SAD SORT OF FORGETTERY DANCE, OR TEACH EVERYONE HERE HOW TO DRIVE IN MOTOR CARS, WHICH IS ONE SIDE OF THE ROAD ONLY AT THE SAME TIME...

OR. OR, OR I COULD SHOW THEM MY BELLY-BUTTON.

Go on. I'll be next to you. It doesn't have to be very long.

HE WAS MY BIG BROTHER. HE REALLY WAS. I WAS ALWAYS A BIT SCARED OF HIM.

BUT I'M NOT SCARED OF HIM ANYMORE. I'M A BIT SAD OF HIM INSTEAD. OKAY. THAT'S ALL.

YOU KNOW YOU *COULD* LEAVE ALL THIS. IT'LL CARRY ON ALL RIGHT WITHOUT YOU. COME OUT WITH ME AND WALK THE STARS.

IT'S ASTONISHING HOW MUCH TROUBLE ONE CAN GET ONESELF INTO, IF ONE *WORKS* AT IT.

AND ASTONISHING HOW MUCH TROUBLE ONE CAN GET ONESELF *OUT* OF, IF ONE SIMPLY ASSUMES THAT EVERYTHING WILL, SOMEHOW OR OTHER, WORK OUT FOR THE BEST.

I have no wish to leave, my brother. But I thank you for your counsel. It is well-meant.

And for your other advice, I thank you also. All will be well.

ENTROPY AND OPTIMISM: THE TWIN FORCES THAT MAKE THE UNIVERSE GO AROUND.

YOU'LL MEET THE OTHERS SOON ENOUGH. IT *WON'T* BE AS BAD AS YOU FEAR.

Shall I... do I tell them that I saw you?

Very well.

BETTER *NOT* TO. BLACK SHEEP, AND ALL THAT...

YOU'LL MAKE ME PROUD OF YOU, YET. AND FOR THE BREAD, AND THE CHEESE, AND THE ALE, AND THE COMPANY: I *THANK* YOU.

Will... will I meet you again?

I WOULDN'T BE AT *ALL* SURPRISED.

I WAS TOLD TO SAY WHATEVER WAS IN MY HEART.

AND I *THOUGHT* I WAS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HOW HE WAS MY BOSS, AND HOW HE GAVE ME A SECOND CHANCE, AND HOW HE TRUSTED ME.

ABOUT HOW SOMETIMES HE TREATED ME LIKE HE THOUGHT I WAS AN **IDIOT**, AND SOMETIMES TREATED ME LIKE HE WAS MY **BOSS**, AND SOMETIMES--VERY OCCASIONALLY--TREATED ME LIKE A **FRIEND**.

I WAS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HOW HE DIED.

AND ABOUT HOW THAT WAS WHAT I WANTED TO DO TOO.

BUT *THAT* ISN'T WHAT'S IN MY HEART. NOT **REALLY**.

HE WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE **WORLD** TO ME, AND HE'S GONE.

AND THE KID, DANIEL... WELL, HE WAS A GOOD KID, AND **HE'S** GONE TOO.

BUT YOU **CAN'T** KILL DREAMS. NOT **REALLY**.

I MEAN, DESPAIR MAY BE THE THING THAT COMES AFTER HOPE, BUT THERE'S STILL HOPE. **RIGHT?** WHEN THERE'S NO HOPE YOU MIGHT AS **WELL** BE DEAD.

WHAT'S IN **MY** HEART?

A LOT OF SORROW. A LITTLE REGRET.

AND THE MEMORY OF THE COOLEST, STRANGEST, MOST INFURIATING BOSS... FRIEND... BOSS... I EVER HAD.

THAT'S WHAT.

AND SOME OF THEM SPOKE, THAT DAY; AND SOME OF THEM WERE SILENT.

BUT WE DO NOT NEED TO RECOUNT EVERY SERMON AND EULOGY. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE THERE. YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN, IN YOUR WAKING HOURS, WHAT YOU HEARD THAT DAY--

BUT YOU WILL REMEMBER IT, IN THE SOFT, LOST, SLUMBERING MOMENTS BETWEEN WAKING AND TRUE SLEEP:

...REMEMBER THE WHISPERING VOICES OF THE GODS OF EARTH AND HEAVEN,

...THE PIPING LAUGHTER OF INNOCENT CHAOS,

BABY

...THE FRIGHTENED RUSTLING OF COLD ORDER...

THE VOICES OF THE LIVING, THE VOICES OF THE DEAD.

THEY WILL HAUNT YOUR SLEEP UNTIL YOU DIE.

AND, BECAUSE THIS IS A DREAM--

--YOU MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THIS IS A DREAM--

--YOU ARE NOT SURPRISED WHEN, WITHOUT ANY GENTLE TRANSITION, BUT AS MATTER-OF-FACTLY AS ANY DREAM DISCOVERY--

--THE MAUSOLEUM IS NO LONGER A MAUSOLEUM. YOU--ALL OF YOU--ARE NOW STANDING UPON A BRIDGE.

WAS THE BUILDING ***BECOME*** A BRIDGE? WAS IT ALWAYS THIS WAY? OR HAVE YOU LEFT THE MAUSOLEUM FAR BEHIND, ON SOME DARK TRANSITIONAL JOURNEY?

YOU CANNOT TELL.

BUT WHAT YOU HAD MISTAKEN FOR A BIER IS NOW, UNQUESTIONABLY, A BOAT.

NOW THE GIRL IN THE RED DRESS TALKS TO YOU ALL, AS THE BOAT BEGINS ITS PASSAGE DOWN THE SLOW STREAM.

AND HER WORDS MAKE SENSE OF EVERYTHING.

SHE GIVES YOU PEACE. SHE GIVES YOU MEANING.

AND SHE BIDS HER BROTHER GOODBYE.

AND THEN YOU ARE FLOATING, BODILESS, HIGH ABOVE THE WORLD...

AND, AS IF IN A DREAM, YOU CAN DO NOTHING BUT WATCH:

SO. HE IS GONE.

NOW WHAT?

NOW **SOME** OF US GO BACK TO THE CASTLE, AND PRESENT OURSELVES TO DREAM OF THE ENDLESS. THE **REST** OF US GO BACK TO THE WAKING WORLDS, I IMAGINE ...

ARE YOU COMING, MATTHEW?

MM. IN A MINUTE.

Good evening, Hippolyta Trevor Hall.

DANIEL?

No.

D-DANIEL?

What was mortal of Daniel was burned away: what was immortal was...transfigured. I am Dream of the Endless.

You fear vengeance, Lyta.

We are no longer blood-kin, you and I. I am permitted to take life only to protect the Dreaming; but I may punish as I desire.

I ONLY *DID* IT FOR *YOU.*

And you lost your son forever.

DANIEL?

No. I am sorry. not Daniel.

YOU ARE... GOING TO... *HURT* ME, THEN?

The person who was responsible for the death of the first Despair will take the rest of eternity to die. Only then will his pain cease...

And he had better cause for what he did than you.

You sought vengeance, Lyta. But that is a road that has no ending.

Come to me.

You have my mark on you, Lyta Hall. No one shall harm you. Put your life together once again.

Go in peace.

THAT WAS GOOD.

Matthew? I did not send for you.

NO. I CAME ANYWAY.

YOUR FAMILY ARE GATHERING AT THE DOOR, ALONG WITH UMPTY-ZILLION AMBASSADORS AND WELL-WISHERS. I FIGURED IF WE WANTED TO TALK...

...WE'D HAVE TO DO IT NOW.

Have you decided what you want?

I DON'T WANT TO BE YOUR RAVEN. I WAS HIS RAVEN. IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT. IT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME.

AS YOU WILL.

BUT, JEEZ. YOU'RE JUST A KID. WELL. KINDA.

YOU'RE GONNA NEED SOMEONE AROUND TO OFFER ADVICE, BAIL YOU OUT WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, ALL THAT.

AND RAVENS... WELL, WE DON'T GROW ON TREES.

And what brought about this change of heart?

YOU MEAN, IS IT BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME YOU SAVED MY LIFE?

NO.

I HAD TO MAKE A SPEECH ABOUT THE BOSS, AT THE SHINDIG... AND WHILE I WAS TALKING, I THINK I FIGURED A FEW THINGS OUT FOR MYSELF...

FUNERAL'S OVER. TIME TO GET ON WITH OUR LIVES. TIME TO GROW UP.

THE FAMILY WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU IN THE DINING HALL. YOU'D BETTER SEND A MESSAGE TO TARAMIS, TELL HIM TO GET PLENTY OF FOOD OUT THERE.

I DON'T EXPECT ANYONE'LL EAT ANYTHING, BUT IT'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO FIDDLE WITH, IF THERE ARE ANY AWKWARD PAUSES.

AND FROM WHAT I KNOW OF YOUR FAMILY, THE AWKWARD PAUSES WILL PROBABLY BE THE GOOD BITS.

PLEASE, SIR...? I'VE LOST MY FATHER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE.

THERE WAS A FUNERAL, I THINK. AND THEN I CAME HERE. I WAS FOLLOWING A WHITE CAT. NOW I CANNOT FIND MY WAY HOME.

You are... Alexander Burgess.

YES, SIR.

Take this, boy. It will light you safely home...

Sending them home. Sending them all home. All of the dreamers...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

AND THEN HE WOKE UP.

ALEX? YOU ALL RIGHT, LOVE?

I BROUGHT YOUR TEA.

THANK YOU... HOW WAS THE FUNERAL?

IT WAS VERY SAD. POOR JACK. SILLY, SILLY, SILLY BOY.

I SUPPOSE IT MUST JUST'VE BEEN ONE OF THOSE GRAND GESTURES THAT WENT HORRIDLY WRONG

SUCH A WASTE.

PAUL... I HAD A DREAM... WHILE YOU WERE GONE...

ANOTHER BAD ONE?

NOT EXACTLY. MUST'VE BEEN ALL THIS TALK OF FUNERALS... DREAMED I WENT TO ONE...

TO BE HONEST, I WOKE FEELING... SHRIVEN... ABSOLVED...

ACH! I'M JUST BEING A SILLY OLD MAN...

WE'RE BOTH SILLY OLD MEN.

AND THEN SHE WOKE UP...

"WHAT'S HE DOING NOW?"

"HE IS SENDING THEM ALL HOME. WAKING THEM ALL UP."

"WHY...?"

"BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT HE'S DECIDED TO DO, I SUPPOSE. IT MEANS ALL HE HAS TO WORRY ABOUT IS **US.**"

AND THEN HE WOKE UP...

"I KNOW HOW HE FEELS. I KNOW HOW **SCARED** HE MUST BE."

"I WAS VERY SCARED. SHE--I--HAD BEEN SUCH A GRAND LADY. AND NOW I WAS SIMPLY **ME**... I WILL TRY TO BE GOOD TO THIS ONE..."

AND THEN SHE WOKE UP...

"WE ALL WILL."

"HMPH. I SAY, LET'S WAIT AND SEE HOW HE SHAPES UP--"

"DEL...? **THAT'S** NOT FOR EATING. I THINK IT'S A TABLE DECORATION!"

"IT'S **NICE.** IT TASTES A BIT LIKE FOREVER."

AND THEN HE WOKE UP...

"I **LIKE** THE WAY COLORS TASTE. EXCEPT I DON'T LIKE CRIMSONS...OR TURQUOISES... ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY PUT THEIR HEADS INTO THEIR SHELLS AND WON'T PLAY, AND WHEN YOU BREAK THEIR SHELLS TO LET THEM OUT, THEY **DIE**..."

"THAT'S **TURTLES,** DEAR. OR TORTOISES."

"I **THINK** IT'S TURQUOISES."

There. They are awake. All but one ...

YOU SCARED?

Not exactly.

C'MON, KID. I'M WITH YOU. IT'LL BE FINE.

JUST REMEMBER WHAT THE FRENCH SAY. NO, PROBABLY NOT THE FRENCH, THEY'VE GOT A PRESIDENT OR SOMETHING. THE BRITS, MAYBE, OR THE SWEDES.

YOU KNOW THE ONE I MEAN?

No, Matthew. What do they say?

AND THEN ...

THE KING IS DEAD. THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.

THE KING IS DEAD.

LONG LIVE THE KING.

...AND THEN,

FIGHTING TO STAY ASLEEP,

WISHING IT WOULD GO ON FOR EVER,

SURE THAT ONCE THE DREAM WAS OVER, IT WOULD NEVER COME BACK,

...YOU WOKE UP.

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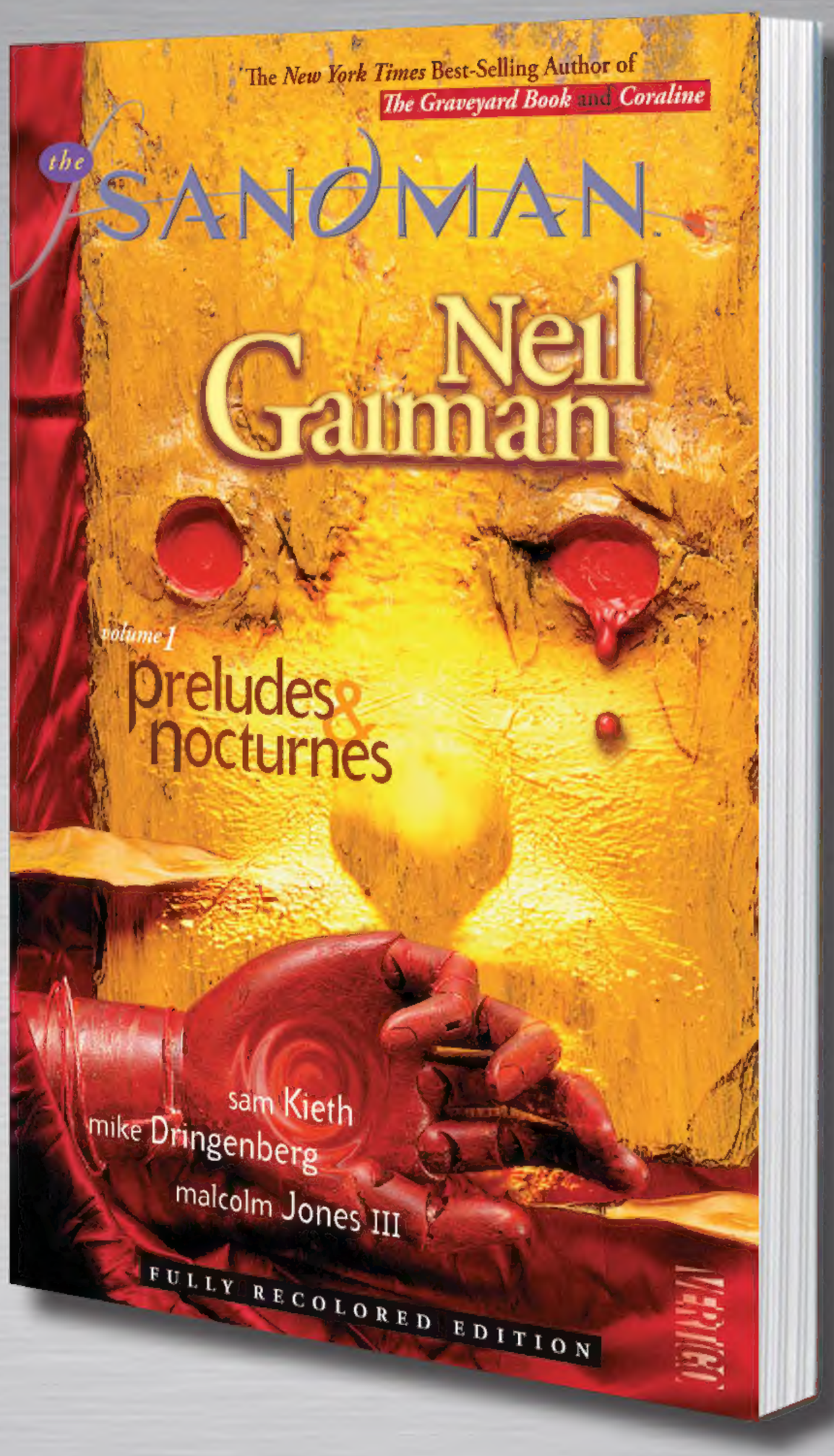

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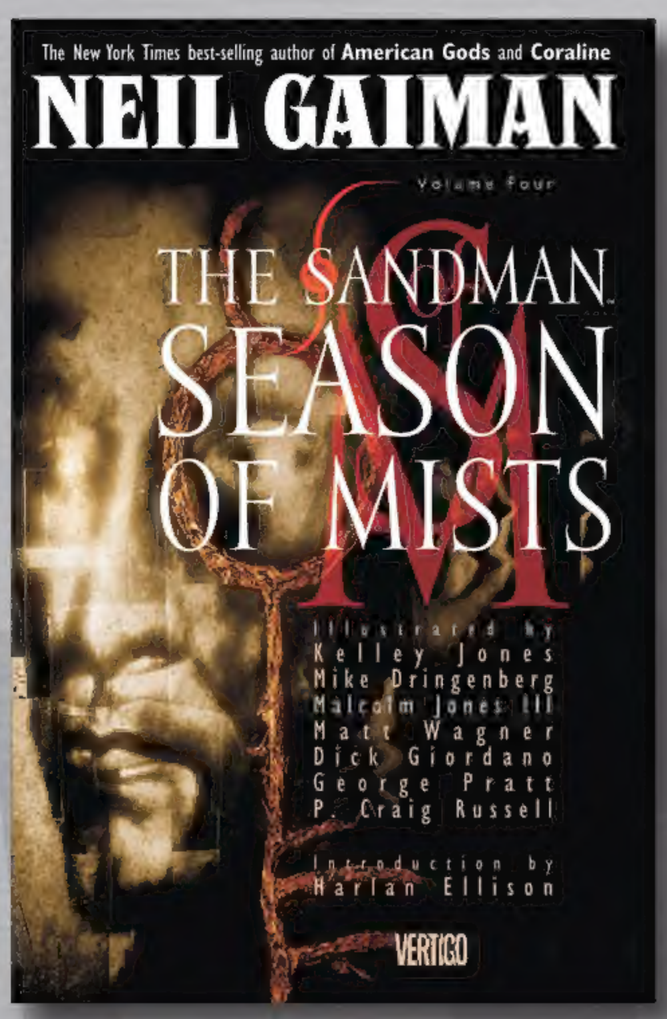

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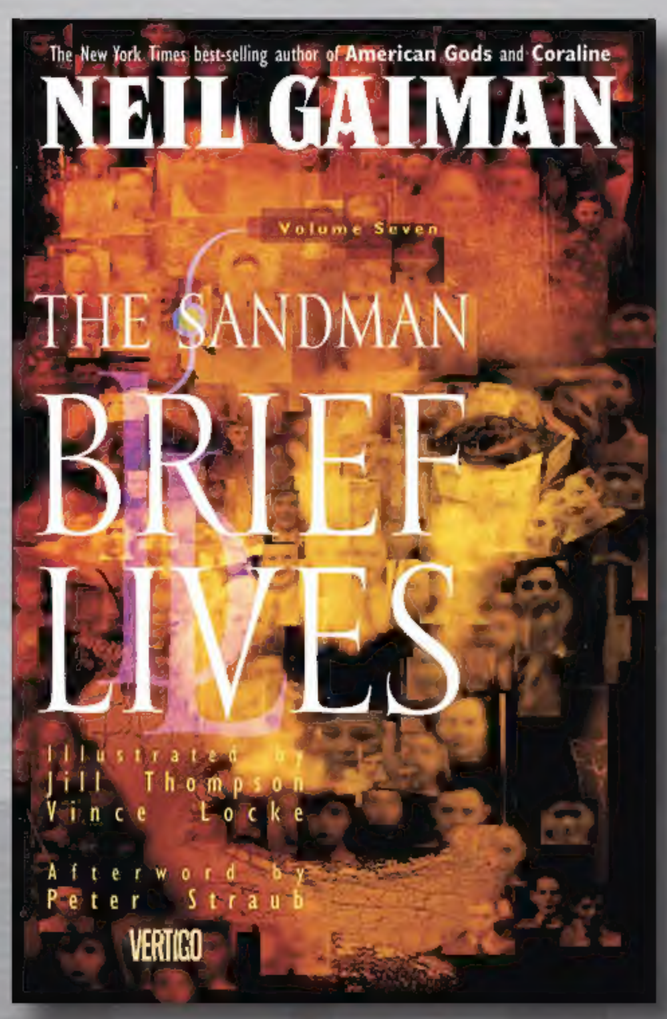

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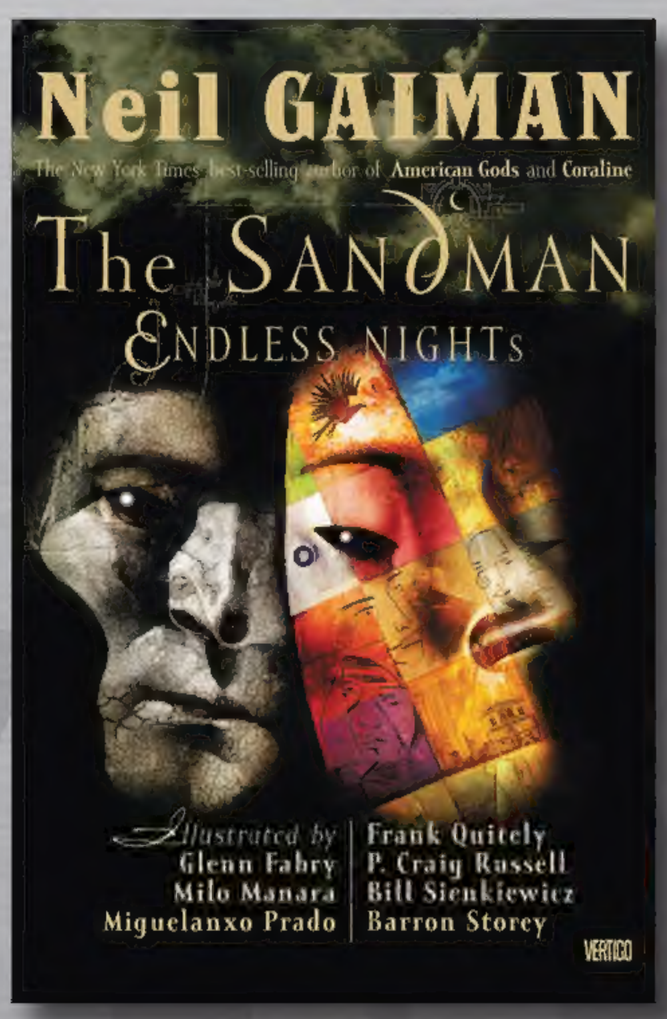

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